*(b) DAP production during March-August, 1996 was 12.97 lakh tonnes. This constitutes a decline of 28.5% over the production during the corresponding period of the previous year. The reasons for this decline are;

(i) lack of adequate demand resulting in accumulation of inventories. DAP sales during April-July, 1996 were 1.44 lakh tonnes less than the previous year.

(ii) increase in the prices of imported intermediates like phosphoric acid and ammonia resulting in higher costs of production and the inability of the market to support the higher costs through better selling prices.

(c) and (d) The price distribution and movement of phosphatic fertilizers have been decontrolled since 1992. The availability of phosphatic fertilizers, which is determined by market forces of demand and supply, is presently comfortable. The government increased the rate of ad-hoc concession w.e.f. 6.7.1996 on all phosphatic and potassic fertilizers including indigenous DAP from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 3000 per metric tonne and imported DAP from Nil to Rs. 1500 per metric tonne. These measures are anticipated to spur its consumption. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation have estimated that DAP consumption will go up from 36.86 lakh metric tonnes in 1995-96 (provisional estimate) to 48.18 lakh metric tonnes in 1996-97. State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have also been impressed upon to fix realistic prices of decontrolled fertilizers under the ad-hoc concession scheme well in time during the Kharif and Rabi seasons in order to ensure that both indigenous production as well as imports of DAP are optimised by manufacturers/importers for meeting the higher levels of anticipated demand.

Forestry Research

*534 *PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any forestry research is being done by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun;

(b) if so, the details of the research done so far and amount spent thereon; and

(c) the extent to which this research has helped to protect the forests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) with its eight Institutes and three Centres, is carrying out important research activities related to forest productivity enhancement, tree improvement, vegetative propagation, tissue culture, seed technology, medicinal plants, multipurpose tree species, biofertilizers, biopesticides, social forestry, agroforestry, pests and diseases, utilisation of timber and non-wood forest products, afforestation of cold/hot deserts, reclamation of saline-alkaline and mined sites, control of shifting cultivation and biodiversity conservation etc. The expenditure incurred by the ICFRE during the four years of the 8th plan period, i.e., from 1992-93 to 1995-96 is Rs. 160.99 crores.

Forestry research being undertaken by the ICFRE Institutes and Centres has resulted in increasing tree productivity which has helped in reducing pressure on forests. Increased productivity and easy availability of quality planting material have also led to adoption of tree cropping on a large scale as part of their normal agricultural practices by farmers in Haryana, Punjab, Western Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and other parts of the country. Research directed at protection of forests against pests and diseases has helped in restoring the health of the forests. Research related to utilisation of species of less commercial importance and other forest products has helped in increasing the income of local people and at the same time consideration and development of forests.

Developmental Programmes

*535. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the welfare and developmental programmes for the people of Uttar Pradesh announced by the Prime Minister between June 1 and August 18, 1996;

(b) whether the required resources for these programmes have been earmarked;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether necessary budgetary provisions have been made for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) The Prime Minister's announcements primarily related to:—

(i) facilitation of payment of sugarcane arrears to cultivators;

(ii) facilitating payment of electricity dues and clearance of pending power applications;

(iii) exemption from stamp duty, etc. for mortage of land and tractors by farmers;

(iv) sanction of certain irrigation programmes;

(v) payment of compensation at market value for acquisition of agricultural land;

(vi) opening of the closed Gorakhpur fertilizer factory,

(vii) hike in the admissible cost of construction under Indira Awas Yojna and accelerating the pace of work under the scheme;

(viii) Coverage of all development blocks under the Employment Assurance Scheme within one year;

(ix) sanction of new Sugar factories along with enhancement of capacity of certain Sugar factories;

(x) completion of the ongoing Mau-Shahganj railway line;

(xi) provision of safe drinking water; and

(xii) opening of primary schools, primary health services in unserved habitations and provision of roads for unconnected villages.

(b) to (d) Many of the announcements relate to acceleration/augmentation of the ongoing schemes such as Indira Awas Yojna and Accelerated Rural Water Supply Project. Under the Indira Awas Yojna, for example, existing provisions amount to Rs. 470 crores and another Rs. 150 crores is proposed to be provided in consultation with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Rural Affairs and Employment. A similar amount additionally has been proposed for provision of safe drinking water. Further, additional Central assistance of Rs. 28 crores would be given for the Primary Health Centres. Unconnected villages will be provided with all weather roads through additional funds from the Employment Assurance Scheme over and above the provision of 188 crores already made in the State budget. The Central assistance has also been assured for some other schemes/projects. The additional Central assistance will be made available through appropriations and overall savings.

Drug Pricing Policy

*536. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been invited to a news-item appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated April, 12, 1996 captioned 'Drug Pricing Policy in shambles';

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the norms by which the administrative ministry are fixing the prices of drugs;

(d) whether the Ministry are following the recommendations of the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices in this regard;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(f) the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY O CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item alleges that recommendations BICP with reference to prices of bulk drugs an formulations are not being accepted by the Departmer and that prices are being fixed on extraneou considerations and are also being delayed.

(c) The prices are fixed under the provisions DPCO'95 and in accordance with the establishe procedures of costing.

(d) and (e) Normally the recommendations of BIC are followed. Delays in notifying the prices s recommended are sometimes caused if the matter is sub judice or interpretation of policy is involved.

(f) Corrective measures taken in this regard incluc expeditious resolution of interpretation of policy matte as and when they arise.

[Translation]

Purchase of Concrete Sleepers

*537. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR: Will th Minister of RAILWAYS pleased to state:

(a) the number of concrete sleepers purchased b the Railways during the last three years, year-wise ar company-wise;

(b) whether the Government have directed sleepe production units to stop their production;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time involved between placing the orders f purchase of concrete sleepers and their supply along wi the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILA PASWAN): (a) The details are as per statement.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Railway normally places order for manufactu and supply of concrete sleepers on various existir sleeper manufacturing units before completion of th previous order. The firm normally starts manufacture ar supply of concrete sleeper immediately after placeme of the order as infrastructure for manufacture and supp of additional quantity is already available with the facto The time involved between placing of order and supp depends upon the capacity of each factory.